



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



LUND JOINS SDDVA TEAM

Steven Lund, a native of Sioux Falls, is the newest member to the Department of Veterans Affairs. After completing weeks of training, Lund will serve as the field officer for southeast South Dakota. He entered the United States Army in 1991 as a 24T; Patriot Missile System mechanic. He attended Basic Training at Fort Sill, OK and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Bliss, TX.

His assignments included: Foxtrot Battery 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 32nd AADCOR, Bitburg Germany; Charlie Battery 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 94th Air Defense Brigade, Hanau Germany; HQ WSMR, Army Materiel Command, White Sands Missile Range, NM; Alpha Battery 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 69th Air Defense Brigade, Hanau Germany; and Bravo Battery 3rd Battalion, 6th Air Defense Brigade, Fort Bliss, TX.

In April 2002, Lund was appointed as a Warrant Officer One. His assignments included: Alpha Battery 1st Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Fort Bliss, TX; Bravo Battery 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Gwangju Korea; Delta Battery 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th Air Defense Brigade, Fort Bliss, TX; Headquarters and Headquarters Battery 2nd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th Air Defense Brigade, Fort Bliss, TX; TCM Sustainment C2/Enterprise Systems Directorate, Combined Arms Support Command, Fort Lee, VA.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with one silver oak leaf clusters and two oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, Army Good Conduct Medal with four bronze loops, National Defense Service Medal with two bronze stars, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with Bronze Star; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service medals, Korea Defense Service Medal, Overseas Ribbon with numeral four, and the Driver and Mechanic Badge.

Steve retired in 2014 as (CW4) with more than 23 years of Active Federal service in the United States Army and four combat deployments.

Lund has been blessed with two beautiful children—Sarah and Steven. In his spare time, Steve can be found enjoying fishing, hunting and photography.

Please join us in welcoming Steve to our team!



Inside this issue:

Guard Unit Receives National Awards	2
VA and NCOA Partnership	3
Air Borne Hazards and Burn Pit Registry	4-5
Stand Downs	5
Upcoming Events	6

Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



12 SD GUARD UNITS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD, 115TH BSC WINS EISENHOWER TROPHY

Twelve out of 42 South Dakota Army National Guard units received the National Guard Bureau's Superior Unit Award in recognition of outstanding achievement during training year 2013. The Superior Unit Award is presented to units who meet highly-enforced military standards in the areas of personnel, training and readiness.

"The Superior Unit Award is very difficult to qualify for," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard. "The fact that so many of our units have earned this award is a testament to our high training standards and overall organizational quality."

The top award for the state went to the 115th Brigade Signal Company, of Brookings, which received the Eisenhower Trophy for the most exceptional SDARNG unit. The Eisenhower Trophy is named in honor of General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower and awarded by the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to the ARNG unit in each state rated the most outstanding during the training year.

"The 115th BSC was established in 2007 and this award has been a goal for the unit since day one, so it is very rewarding to receive this honor," said Capt. Bracken Robinson, 115th commander. "The Soldiers in this unit have always gone the extra mile. This award is proof to how hard they have worked to form a cohesive unit and work as a team to achieve their goals."

Units that received the Superior Unit Award are:

Alpha Battery, 1/147th Field Artillery Battalion—Aberdeen
740th Transportation Company—Aberdeen and Milbank
HHC, 139th Brigade Support Battalion—Brookings
115th Brigade Signal Company—Brookings
HHC, 153rd Engineer Battalion—Huron
211th Engineer Company—Madison and De Smet Forward Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion—Parkston and Huron
200th Engineer Company—Pierre, Mobridge and Chamberlain
152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion—Pierre
155th Engineer Company—Rapid City and Wagner
1742nd Transportation Company—Sioux Falls and Flandreau Alpha Company, 139th Brigade Support Battalion—Watertown

In order to achieve the award, units must maintain assigned personnel strength of 95 percent, complete inactive duty and annual training, and ensure that 95 percent of their soldiers are fully qualified in their duty military occupation specialty. In addition to meeting training goals, weapon qualification rates, Army Physical Fitness Test results and unit inspections factor into award requirements.

This is also the second year in a row that the Superior Unit Award has been awarded to the 740th Transportation Company, 211th Engineer Company and Alpha Company, 139th BSB.

"To achieve the level of commitment that is needed to win these awards takes an enormous amount of dedication from the soldiers, as well as support from both families and civilian employers," said Robinson. "Their support makes it possible and allows our soldiers the ability to overcome life's everyday obstacles and achieve success."



VA AND NCOA PARTNERSHIP OFFERS PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES CARING FOR VETERANS

The United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) have partnered to offer a unique online workshop for family members who are caring for our nation's veterans.

Building Better Caregivers™ supports families caring for veterans with dementia, memory problems, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other serious injuries or illnesses. The program aims to reach thousands of caregivers in all 50 states.

"The National Council on Aging is a valuable partner with the VA because of their experience working with multiple generations of veterans", said Amber Heinert, VA Black Hills Health Care System (VA BHHCS) Caregiver Support Program Coordinator. "VA Black Hills encourages caregivers to use this resource as a source of support and trusted information. This type of on-line education gives individuals more flexibility and convenience to connect with others."

Building Better Caregivers™ is a six-week, highly interactive online workshop where 20-25 family caregivers gather to learn time and stress management, healthy eating, exercise, and how to deal with difficult emotions. Participants log on two to three times each week to review lessons, share ideas with other caregivers, and access tools to make caregiving easier. Developed at Stanford University, the program has been recognized for its ability to reduce caregiver stress and depression, especially among working caregivers.

Caregivers of veterans who currently receive health care from VA BHHCS and are interested in participating in Building Better Caregivers™ should contact Amber Heinert, LCSW-PIP at 605-745-2000 x 9 2574 or amber.heinert@va.gov.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is the nation's leading nonprofit service and advocacy organization representing older adults and the community organizations that serve them. Our goal is to improve the health and economic security of 10 million older adults by 2020. For more than 60 years, NCOA has been a trusted voice and innovative problem-solver helping seniors navigate the challenges of aging in America. We work with local and national partners to give older adults tools and information to stay healthy and secure, and we advocate for programs and policies to improve the lives of all seniors, especially the most vulnerable. For more information, please visit www.ncoa.org.



AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that veterans and service members who were close to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk for health problems. Health effects from burn pit exposure will vary and depend on a number of factors such as the kind of waste being burned, pre-existing conditions, and wind direction. They note that there is not enough medical or scientific information to conclude that short or long-term health effects have occurred from exposures to smoke from burn pits or other airborne hazards during recent deployments. The VA continues to study the health of veterans who have deployed to recent conflicts. The VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) are working on initiatives that address clinical issues and the need for long-term studies.

Who is the registry for?

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is a database of health information about veterans and service members. Registry participation is open to any veteran or service member who served in: OEF/OIF/OND or in Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001, or Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990. The Southwest Asia theater of operations includes the following locations: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

Why should I participate in the registry?

By participating in the registry, you can make a difference in your health and the health of fellow veterans and service members. Participate in the registry to become more aware of your own health and to receive information about ongoing health studies and VA services. Participants may request a no-cost medical evaluation in which to discuss their completed questionnaire with a VA or DoD health provider. In addition, other benefits include helping the VA to learn more about the potential health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards.

What will I need to participate?

You may participate in the registry by completing a web-based health questionnaire at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry>. To access the questionnaire, you will need your Department of Defense Self-Service logon (DS Logon). You may apply for a DS Logon account at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess> if you do not already have one. The DS Logon is a secure, self-service identification that allows active-duty service members and veterans to access several websites using a single username and password. The VA will use deployment data provided by DoD to determine your eligibility for the registry.

What types of questions should I be prepared to answer?

We estimate that the questionnaire should take 40 minutes to complete. The questions have been designed to give a broad picture of your health and current and past exposures. You will be asked a series of questions in the following categories: Deployment dates and bases at which you were stationed; conditions and health issues that cause difficulty with daily activities; current and past health symptoms; residential history (where you've lived); occupational history (where you've worked); dust, gas, vapors or fumes exposures; home environment and hobbies; health care utilization; and contact preferences. (continued on next page)

AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY (CONTINUED)

Why does the questionnaire ask questions about my current job and hobbies?

It is important for medical providers to have a complete picture of your health. The questionnaire asks a broad range of questions because an individual's health is greatly influenced by their lifestyle. Health conditions can worsen over time from additional or prolonged exposures received during work or recreation. Your current or past jobs, hobbies, civilian exposures, and lifestyle will not affect eligibility for health care benefits.

I am experiencing symptoms that I believe are related to exposure to burn pits.

Help is available at VA and DoD. Medical professionals with expertise in military exposures and health care benefits are available at the VA medical centers nationwide. Veterans who are already enrolled in VA health care should talk to their primary care provider. Veterans who are not already enrolled should talk to an Environmental Health Coordinator at the nearest VA medical center. Find a local Environmental Health Coordinator by visiting <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>, or calling 1-877-222-8387. Servicemembers should discuss any concerns or health issues with their health care provider.

Register: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>

Learn more: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov> or call 1-877-222-8387

VETERANS STAND DOWNS

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System and their partners will be hosting Veterans Stand Downs Aug. 22 in Sioux City, IA, Sept. 5 in Watertown, Sept. 11 in Wagner, and Sept. 19 in Sioux Falls.

When the community reaches out to homeless veterans, veterans in need, and their families, it strengthens ties between the homeless and those who really care.

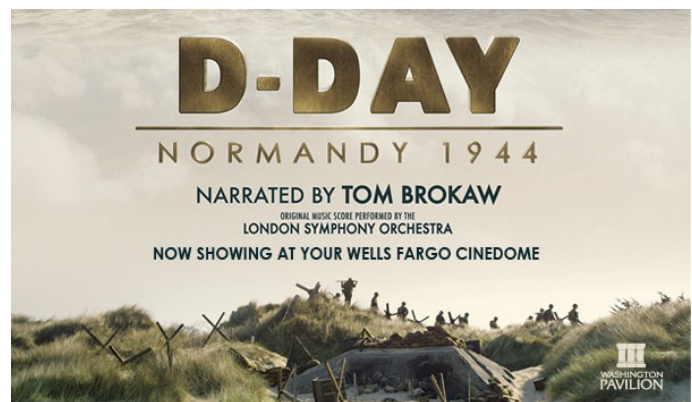
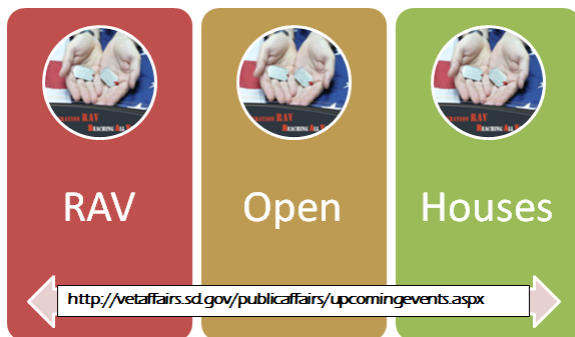
Military reservists, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations and members of the local communities do just this as they call veterans in from the urban battlefield to give them a hand up, and not a hand out, during the Stand Downs.



Upcoming Events

2014

Aug. 6—DOL Veterans/Guardsmen/Reservists/Spouses Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 20—Annual SFVAHCS Show and Shine
Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux City, IA
Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Aug. 30— 727th DAV 10th Annual Charity Poker Run—Brookings—10:00 am
Sept. 5—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Watertown
Sept. 11—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Wagner
Sept. 19—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux Falls
Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://mva.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

